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ABSTRACT

A dramatic increase in faculty development efforts at Cayuga County Community College (Auburn, New York) followed a change in administration. The three kinds of faculty improvement programs available were: (1) faculty participation projects such as worksnops and seminars on professional growth (there were five during 1978); (2) instructional assistance projects in which faculty worked with specialists in areas such as audio-visual media and individualized instruction in a new learning skills center and in the audio-visual center; and (3) traditional practices such as granting sabbatical leaves and course reductions to encourage continued education either by taking university courses or by engaging in on-campus "improvement" projects. In light of the increased development activities, research was conducted to determine who among the faculty were participating. The total number of seminars or workshops participated in by each faculty member was the measure of their involvement. Comparing involvement with student ratings of teacher performance, it was found that those who were already competent participated most frequently. Participation was heaviest among untenured faculty, that is, among those whose job security was threatened. A higher rate of participation was found among department chairpersons, and a slightly higher participation rate among the general faculty as compared to the "skills subject" faculty. (MB)

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Faculty Development At The Community College: Who Participates

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Abstract

Faculty Development At The Community College: Who Participates?

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This paper reviews the efforts at faculty development at Cayuga County Community College in Auburn, New York. In addition, data were gathered to examine the following hypotheses: (1) When development opportunities are made available, it is generally those who are already competent who participate most frequently. (2) Participation will be heaviest among those, such as untenured faculty, whose job security is most threatened. (3) Department chairpersons and other teacher/administrators will be underrepresented among those electing to participate. (4) Faculty from "traditional" disciplines will be underrepresented. All but the final two hypotheses are tentatively supported. Alternate interpretations and implications are discussed.

Faculty Development At The Community College: Who Participates?

Introduction

The term "faculty development" and "instructional improvement" have especially important meaning in the community college in this era of declining enrollments. As has been pointed out elsewhere (The Group for Human Development in Education 1974) declining enrollments have greatly decreased faculty mobility and sabotaged faculty improvement based upon the "new blood" theory. No longer is it feasible for a community college to improve its faculty by hiring bright new talent nor is it possible for individual faculty to look to a new position as a way to professional growth. It seems likely that a community college and its faculty will generally either grow together or grow old together.

This paper is intended to make a contribution in this crucial area of community college life.

The paper is divided into two parts. Part one consists of a report on the efforts toward faculty development at Cayuga County Community College in Auburn, New York. The second section of this paper presents the results of research intended to address a number of questions pertaining to faculty development.

The first, descriptive, section of the paper organizes the college's efforts at faculty development into three categories. These categories are adapted from those articulated by Centra (1978).

The three kinds of faculty development are: (1) faculty participation projects such as workshops and seminars on professional growth.

(2) Instructional assistance projects in which faculty work with specialists in areas such as audio-visual media, individualized instruction, etc. (3) Traditional practices such as granting sabbatical leaves and course reductions to encourage continued faculty education.

During the past year at Cayuga County Community College, a concerted effort has been made to step up activities in all three of the above categories of faculty development.

In the first category five 1-2 hour workshops or seminars were conducted during the academic year. These particular programs were offered because of faculty interest expressed on a survey. The topics were (1) Individualized Instruction; (2) Using Audio-Visual materials and technologies; (3) The use of television videotaping for the improvement of lecture skills; (4) A seminar on the dilemna of trying to uphold academic standards while meeting students where they are; and (5) How understanding the structure of knowledge can improve college teaching.

In the second category, a "learnings skills center" was established, and a number of instructors became involved in the development and utilization of individualized instructional packages and programs. Also, the audio-visual center instituted a number of projects with emphasis upon the expanded utilization of such standard equipment as overhead projector presentations, movies, and instructor-created slide programs.

In the third category, attempts were made to increase faculty energies on campus. In the past, course reductions had been offered

to faculty members for course work at nearby universities. Approximately 8 - 12% of the faculty are generally granted a course reduction each year. As part of the recent efforts at faculty development, faculty have been offered an option of accepting a grant for engaging in on-campus projects in place of taking a course. Projects such as the development of individualized instructional packages for courses, and the development of the workshops mentioned above have been examples of this kind of effort. Any faculty member who wishes to work on some project to improve a course or curriculum, or to improve some aspect of presentation or evaluation can make application for a grant.

Traditional sabbatics and course reductions continue to be granted, but there has been an effort to channel college financial resources, and faculty energies, into projects and programs which might be called "institutional improvement".

The dramatic increase in faculty development efforts at C.C.C.C. followed a change in administration. The new President, and the new College Dean have demonstrated important leadership in both word and deed to the effect that efforts to improve the quality of classroom instruction are worthwhile, will be supported and will be rewarded. The effect of this abrupt change from an earlier neutral or even hostile view toward any efforts that might call for change, was dramatic. Faculty members who had been struggling on their own were suddenly given support, and innovative or creative teachers were suddenly given the opportunity to share ideas, successes and failures with each other.

In this atmosphere, it is difficult to imagine how development efforts could fail. Workshops and seminars were well attended (but completely voluntary). Grants were applied for and funded. The Learning Skills Center was well utilized.

As a faculty member whose definition of a good college president once was "a president who leaves his faculty alone", I must state that my experiences at this college have made it crystal clear to me that (at least at the Community College level) administrative leadership and tangible support may be the most important single factor in the success of faculty efforts toward self-improvement.

PART II - INTRODUCTION

The second section of this paper addresses four hypotheses:

(1) It has frequently been said that when faculty development opportunities are made available, it is usually those instructors who need improvement the least who will avail themselves of the opportunity for improvement, while those most in need fail to participate. This has often been seen as a weakness in faculty development efforts.

(2) The second hypothesis to be examined states that those faculty members whose position at the college is secure through tenure will be less likely to participate in faculty development than those whose positions are less secure, that is, untenured faculty.

(3) A third hypothesis states that participation in faculty development activities will relate to the degree to which classroom teaching is the dominant role for the individual. According to this hypothesis, such faculty as department chairmen or program coordinators, whose responsibilities are divided between teaching and administration,

will be less inclined to participate because of the likely self-perception that teaching is not their primary, or at least sole, role. (4) The final hypothesis asserts that faculty members who teach material which is skill-oriented and specific, such as police science, fire science, and nursing, will be more inclined to participate in development opportunities efforts than those who teach more abstract subjects such as philosophy and history. This follows from the generally held belief that skill teaching can be planned, programmed and improved whereas "traditional" education involves much more nebulous procedures, such that teaching is seen as an "art".

PROCEDURE

In order to test any of these hypotheses, some method of scoring faculty members on level of participation in development efforts was needed. The measure chosen was the total number of seminars or workshops participated in by each faculty member.

Each faculty member was awarded one point for participating in each workshop. A faculty member's participation score (PS) then, would be the number of workshops or seminars he or she had attended (0,1,2,3,4, or 5).

Hypothesis One:

To test hypothesis one, a measure of faculty "need for improvement" was needed. Since all faculty members are required to submit to student evaluations each year, it was decided to use those evaluations as a measure of teaching effectiveness. One item on the

questionnaire asks students to compare the teaching effectiveness of their instructor with others with whom the students have taken a course. The responses called for are A, B, C, D and F.

For testing hypothesis one, a grade-point-average (GPA) was calculated for each faculty member. An N of forty student responses or more for each faculty was used, and all responses had been generated before any of the workshops took place.

Example of G.P.A. Calculation

Professor #1 Student Responses = 100 (N = 100)

Grade	N	Value	Honor Points (HP)
A	10	4	40
B	20	3	60
C	40	2	80
D	20	1	20
F	10	0	0
Totals	100	-	200

$$GPA = \frac{HP}{N} = \frac{200}{100} \quad GPA = 2.00$$

To test hypothesis one, faculty were ranked from highest to lowest on G.P.A. and on P.S. and the two rankings tested for correlations using Spearman's Coefficient of rank Correlation with tied ranks, and a test of significance performed on the results.

Hypothesis #2

To test this hypothesis, a mean participation score was calculated for tenured faculty and untenured faculty, and the scores compared. A test of significance was performed on the difference between the means.

Hypothesis #3

A mean participation score was calculated for department chairpersons or program coordinators, and this mean compared with the mean participation score for the remainder of the faculty, and a test of significance performed.

Hypothesis #4

For the purposes of this study, the "skill oriented" disciplines were: Physical Education, Police Science and Fire Science, Occupational Education, Business, Data Processing, Telecommunications, and Nursing. A mean participation score was calculated for the faculty in these areas, and a comparison made between it and the mean score for the rest of the faculty. A test of significance was then performed on the difference between the means.

RESULTS

Hypothesis #1

A correlation of +.335 was found between faculty participation and faculty competence. This is significant to .01 level, which means that those faculty members rated as most effective participated more often in the workshops and seminars.

Table I

Table one presents an "eye ball" impression of the nature of this relationship by presenting the participation scores of the "top ten" and the "bottom ten" faculty members.

Rank	Participation Score	Rank	Participation Score
1	1	68	0
2	0	69	0
3	0	70	0
4	1	71	0
5	2	72	0
6	1	73	2
7	4	74	0
8	1	75	0
9	2	76	0
10	0	77	0

Hypothesis Two:

There are 18 untenured faculty and 59 tenured faculty. The total participation score for untenured faculty was 17, yielding a mean participation score of .94. For tenured faculty, the total score was 37, with a mean of .62. The difference between these two means is significant tc the .05 level.

Hypothesis Three:

This hypothesis was not confirmed. In fact, a higher participation score was found for Department Chairpersons ($\bar{x}$ = 1.20), than for the rest of the faculty ($\bar{x}$ = 0.63). There are ten chairpersons or coordinators, leaving 67 in the comparison group. This difference in the means is significant to the .05 level.

Hypothesis Four:

This hypothesis was not confirmed. In fact, there was slightly higher participation among the general faculty compared to the "skill subjects" faculty. This difference, however, was not significant. "Skill subjects" faculty participation mean was .66 (N = 27). "Traditional faculty participation mean was .72 (N = 50).

DISCUSSION

Before an attempt is made to interpret the results of this study, a number of methodological questions need to be addressed.

First, virtually all of the results rest upon the assumption that the differential participation levels of faculty members in the five workshops is meaningful. This assertion, perhaps, needs defending.

All five workshops were announced to all faculty through their mailboxes. All sessions were scheduled in the middle of the day, during a "free" hour when no classes were in session. The content of these sessions was varied to hopefully achieve wide appeal. Faculty attendence was completely voluntary and self-determined. It would seem then, that attendence reflects some combination of commitment to improvement, perception of self as needing improvement, and perception of the session as likely to help, at least in some way.

An important methodological question associated with Hypothesis One is whether or not it is justified to assume that student evaluation responses are indicative of teaching effectiveness.

Without getting involved in detail in the long-standing debate concerning the usefulness of student evaluations, the following statements seem defensible:

Students are the consumers of the educational service. As such, they seem to be uniquely suited to render a judgement about the quality of that service. In addition, the consensus of a number of studies on the matter is in agreement with the following views. (Bernstein, 1976)

1. There is surprising agreement among students, and between faculty and students, about the effectiveness of given teachers.

2. There is little or no correlation between the grade a student obtains .... and his appraisal.

3. .... the use of reruns at intervals of time indicate a high stability of ratings. (Bernstein, 1976, page 16)

With these findings in mind, it seems defensible to assume that a general rating by students could be used as a measure of teaching effectiveness.

What, then, could the relationship between teaching effectiveness and participation in instructional improvement efforts mean? Perhaps the common factor is dedication or enthusiasm for teaching, such that those who are higher on this factor would tend to be better teachers and more inclined to try to improve. Another possible interpretation follows from the idea that participation would only be expected from someone who believed that something worthwhile was being offered. Perhaps the lower-rated teachers were low in participation because of some kind of cynicism, or at least skepticism, or lack of willingness to try to learn new things.

Either way, the results seem to support the idea that faculty development efforts tend to help those most who need help the least. If those interested in improving classroom instruction wish to reach those most in need of help, some means of participation other than voluntary self-selection may be called for.

The second research finding indicated that untenured faculty were more likely to participate in development efforts than were

tenured faculty. One interpretation of this finding is that those whose jobs are less secure will "hussle" more than those who may have reason to be complacent. An alternative, and perhaps less cynical, interpretation follows from the fact that untenured faculty are generally younger and less experienced, and may therefore be more likely to view themselves as needing "development".

The third finding, that department chairpersons participated heavily compared to the rest of the faculty, was a surprise. Perhaps this participation reflected the administration support mentioned in the first part of this paper. In other words, as "partial administrators" themselves, department chairpersons might be especially sensitive to "pressure from above".

Alternately, perhaps department chairpersons got to be department chairpersons because they are more energetic, dedicated or open-minded, than the rest of us.

In any case, the original hypothesis that department chairpersons would be less inclined to participate because of some kind of "diffusion of role" between being a "teacher" and being an "administrator" was not supported.

The predicted relationship between subject taught and participation was not supported. Perhaps the topics of the sessions were such that they had general interest and appeal, instead of being relevent to a "how to" approach. It might also be argued that few of the fields of study involved were really "skill oriented" except perhaps our courses in Occupational Education.

Because of the limited sample size (77 full-time faculty), and the limited nature of the sample (all from one institution), and the correlational nature of the data, the results of this research have been presented as suggestive rather than conclusive. It is hoped that further research may be generated.

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